

VZCZCXRO7535
PP RUEHRN
DE RUEHC #7760/01 0822001
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 231943Z MAR 09
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO RUEHRN/USMISSION UN ROME PRIORITY 0575
INFO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0253
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 3853
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2966
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 4356
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 3547
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 6789
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 6393
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 5379

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 027760

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPDC](#) [PREL](#) [FAO](#) [UN](#)
SUBJECT: FAO DG DIOUF FIRM ON HIS PLAN FOR A NOVEMBER
SUMMIT

11. (SBU) SUMMARY. In his meeting with IO DAS Anderson, FAO Director-General Diouf made clear that he intends to go forward with his plans for a head-of-state level food summit as part of the November 14-21 FAO Conference, despite concerns raised by the U.S. and other countries with the summit proposal. Diouf rejected arguments that a summit in November is premature and that it would interfere with ongoing efforts to reform the FAO. Diouf did say, however, if President Obama were to host a food security summit in the U.S. anywhere outside of New York, he would reconsider his plans. END Summary.

Diouf Proceeding with a Summit:

12. (SBU) Diouf at length explained his arguments for calling for a summit in Rome in November 2009. He indicated that food prices in developing countries are still substantially higher than in 2006, but production in most developing countries did not respond to the price increase and agricultural productivity remains low. Prices for inputs like seeds and fertilizer in developing countries are still very high and the financial crisis is lowering incomes and making more people food-insecure. Diouf continues to see a need to raise the level of attention to the issue on the international agenda. He acknowledged some success in boosting interest in the U.S. Congress and private foundations in promoting agricultural development to increase production. He insisted on the need to address food security, agricultural investment, and rural infrastructure in a single forum. When asked what would be different about the outcome of a new summit than the meeting held in June 2008, Diouf said he aims to announce a new international goal to eradicate hunger worldwide by 2025.

13. (SBU) Diouf dismissed U.S. concerns (which have been raised by other countries such as Canada) over the drawbacks of a November summit at FAO headquarters. Diouf said he cannot call off his plans because he alleged that he has wide international support including from the Arab Group, the African Union, Caribbean states, Chile and Brazil, including substantial commitments of financial support from wealthy Gulf states. He also claimed that the regional groups in Rome support his plan. Diouf dismissed suggestions that the UN General Assembly head-of-state meetings in September may be a better venue for addressing his concerns, saying that attention to food security would be "diluted" there. (COMMENT: Diouf appeared to be against addressing food security at all in New York. END COMMENT.) He also said that food security would also not have the prominence it should have if it were to be addressed in the context of an

overall discussion on the Millennium Development Goals, including at the proposed MDG summit in 2010. He said Italy's planned G8 discussion involving Diouf is intended to focus on Africa rather than food security. Noting several times that he had written repeatedly to President Obama regarding his proposal, Diouf said that he would definitely reconsider his summit plan if the President accepted his invitation to host a food security conference in the United States - anywhere outside of New York, he added. DAS Anderson reiterated the U.S. view that a summit in Rome in November would not be helpful to the broader effort to build a global partnership encompassing all UN system and other major actors.

Diouf says Cooperation with UN High-Level Task Force is Good:

¶4. (SBU) Diouf said that he, WFP Executive Director Josette Sheeran, IFAD President Bage, and Coordinator of the UN High-Level Task Force David Nabarro are "working as a team." In this vein, he claimed that the FAO's Committee on Food Security (CFS) has been "entrusted with moving the Global Partnership on Food and Agriculture Security (GPAFS) forward." DAS Anderson pressed that the CFS is in need of reform, which we hope to see in process by the November

STATE 00027760 002 OF 002

Conference. A reformed CFS, he added, would be in a better position to work in support of the GPAFS. DAS Anderson added that the U.S. prefers a single international group of experts to support the Global Partnership, rather than multiple groupings.

Discussion with Dr. Fedoroff

¶5. (SBU) Diouf subsequently met with Dr. Nina Fedoroff, Science Adviser to the Secretary. The discussion focused on actions the FAO is taking to promote crop adaptation to climate change and the need for infrastructure and leadership in Africa to combat food insecurity. Dr. Fedoroff specifically noted that the FAO could help bridge the gap between international and private sector research work, and could be an important promoter of biotechnology to address climate adaptation. DAS Anderson added that a reformed CFS, if recognized as a credible forum for serious discussion of food security issues, could provide a forum for airing of these issues. Diouf invited Dr. Fedoroff to visit FAO when she is in Rome for the May 5-7 Vatican conference on GMOs.
CLINTON